



Alma Kalaju Webou

Born in 1928. Died in 2009, Pinkalakara in the Great Sandy Desert. Broome, Australia.

BIOGRAPHY

“I lost my mummy and sister here,” said Alma (Kalaju) Webou when speaking of Pinkalarta, her mother’s Country where she was born and grew up in the Great Sandy Desert. These arid planes span from Australia’s north-western coastline into the heart of the Northern Territory. A devastating seven-year drought in the 1970s exiled Webou’s people, the Yulparija, from this expanse and into the beckoning hands of the Bidyadanga Community south of Broome, at this time managed by a Catholic mission as a catchment zone for several displaced Aboriginal language and social groups. Webou returned to painting Pinkalarta time and time again, however, she divulged very little about the history of her Country, even as a Yulparija senior law woman. Bidyadanga’s environment, in which heterogeneous clan groups were integrated into one zone, precipitated elders to protect their cultural knowledge. But we can engage with Webou’s dense lattices of dot work not as mere topographies depicting her Country but as insistent recollections of her cultural memory, called up through landscape.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2005 *Pinkalarta*, Short St Gallery @ Mary’s Place, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2014 *Saltwater Soul Desert Heart*, Short St Gallery Broome, Western Australia, Australia
- 2014 *Country to Coast; Colours of the Kimberley*, Curated by Georges Petitjean, Aboriginal Art Museum, Utrecht, Netherlands
- 2012 *West of Well 33*, Yaama Ganu Gallery, Sydney, Australia
- 2012 *Crossing Cultures*, The Owen and Wagner Collection of Contemporary Aboriginal Australian, The Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, United States
- 2012 *Luminescences: The Colour of Bidyadanga*, Harvey Art Projects, Idaho, United States
- 2012 *Round and Round in that Rockhole*, Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
- 2010 *Melbourne Art Fair*, Short St Gallery & William Mora Galleries present the Yulparija artists, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne, Australia
- 2007 *Desert Heart*, Nevill Keating Gallery, London, United Kingdom
- 2007 *From Pinkalarta to Lungarung: Alma (Kalaju) Webou & Weaver Jack*, Aboriginal and Pacific Art, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
- 2007 *From the Bungalow I: Yulparija Artists*, Johnston Gallery, Perth, Western Australia, Australia
- 2006 *Northern Journey*, The Priory at Bingie, Bingie, New South Wales, Australia
- 2006 *Bidyadanga Women*, Chapman Gallery, Canberra, Australia
- 2006 *2006 Outback Art Prize*, Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery, Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australia
- 2006 *Right here, right now: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander acquisitions*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia
- 2006 *23rd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2005 *The return of our land*, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
- 2005 *Mummy + daughter*, Jan Billycan and Alma Webou, William Mora Galleries, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
- 2005 *Painting Country - A West to East Journey*, World Expo Aichi, Japan
- 2005 *Bidyadanga 2005 - Recent Works*, Short St Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
- 2004 *Desert Ocean*, Short St. Gallery @ Kidogo Gallery, Fremantle, Western Australia, Australia

- 2004 *Divas of the Desert*, Gallery Gondwana, Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
2004 *Bidyadanga Artists*, William Mora Gallery, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
2004 *Bidyadanga Art*, Art House Gallery, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
2004 *21st Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Award*, Museum & Art Gallery of Northern Territory, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
2004 *Bidyadanga Artists*, Raft Art Space, Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia
2004 *Desert to Saltwater*, Short st. Gallery @ Mary Place Gallery, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
2003 *Manyiljara*, Short st. Gallery, Broome, Western Australia, Australia
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COLLECTIONS

Art Gallery of Western Australia
Newcastle Art Gallery
National Gallery of Australia
National Gallery of Victoria
Felton Collection
Museum and Art Gallery of Northern Territory
Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery
Lavery Collection
Myer Collection
Sam Barry Collection
Harvey Wagner Collection, United States
Art Gallery of New South Wales
Brocard - Estrangin Collection
The Hood Museum, Dartmouth, United States

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Nicolas Rothwell, 'Journeys to the Interior', Black Inc, Australia, 2010
The Australian Newspaper, "Ancient and modern", Nicholas Rothwell, June 1, 2008
Beyond Sacred: Recent Paintings from Australia's Remote Aboriginal Communities - The Collection of Colin and Elizabeth Lavery, Hardie Grant Books Australia, 2008
The New McCulloch's Encyclopedia of Australian Art, 2006
The Canberra Times, 'Right here, right now', Sasha Grishin, 1 June 2006
National Indigenous Times, 'From the Ancient to the Cutting Edge', May 2006
The Australian, "Look Whose Been Framed Now", 17 March, 2006
Dynasties, Series:4, Ep:8, The Mora Family, January 2006
Painting Country-A West to East Journey , World Expo Aichi, Catalogue, July 2005
The Australian Financial Review Magazine, "Art Direction," June 2004
The Age Newspaper, "Yulparija show their colours," April 19, 2004
The Australian Newspaper, "West Coast's Late Bloomers" April 2004
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